

HARASSMENT

The College has a duty of care to all its employees and is committed to a safe working environment. It will not tolerate harassment or bullying in any form, and will take disciplinary action against offenders, up to and including dismissal.

The College recognises that to work effectively its employees need an environment in which they are respected and valued for their contributions. Appropriate behaviour is fostered by a workplace culture which encourages positive, supportive and open interactions. This sort of behaviour, normal to the vast majority of College employees and members, helps to promote good working relationships and a positive working atmosphere.

The College therefore expects its employees to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times. This includes work-related events which may take place outside College or normal working hours, including parties and other social events. Likewise, employees have the right to expect professional behaviour from others, and a corresponding responsibility to behave professionally towards others.

Definition

- 1.1. There are many forms of harassment and bullying which can be described in simple terms as unwelcome behaviour that affects the dignity of women and men. It is the conduct of one person against another or others when an intimidating, hostile or offensive atmosphere is created for the complainant(s). Inappropriate behaviour can result in stress and stress-related illness.
- 1.2. Harassment takes many forms, occurs on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or group of individuals. It can include the use of social media even if used outside normal working hours. It is not the intention of the harasser but the conduct itself and the impact on the recipient which determines what constitutes harassment. The impact of harassment can result in the recipient feeling discomfort or humiliation or may adversely affect the recipient's job performance, undermine job security or prospects or create a threatening or intimidating work environment. It can also provoke aggressive, retaliatory attitudes and actions. Certain behaviour will be, by its nature or severity unwelcome, even on a single occasion.
- 1.3. Social interaction in the workplace involving mutually acceptable behaviour should be distinguished from harassment. However, it should be borne in mind that what is initially acceptable to some may be offensive to others.
- 1.4. Embarrassment, fear of intimidation, or difficulty in defining what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining about the behaviour of others which causes them distress. Retaliation against or victimisation of an employee for making a complaint is a disciplinary offence. Differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signs can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another. The defining features of harassment, however, are that the behaviour is unwanted by the recipient.

Management Responsibilities

- 1.5. Heads of Departments are required to implement this policy, and to make every effort to ensure that harassment does not occur. They should:
 - a) Set a good example by ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect;

- b) Bring this policy to the attention of their employees, and ensure that every employee has access to and read a copy;
- c) Ensure that employees attend specified mandatory training, and that training is repeated as appropriate;
- d) Be responsive and supportive to any employee who makes an allegation, provide clear advice on procedure to be followed and ensure that confidentiality is maintained.
- e) After being advised of an alleged incident, consult with the HR Manager, and investigate fairly, in confidence and without prejudice, the details of such a complaint. (If the complaint is against a manager, the person who will conduct the investigation will be the next more senior person in the line management structure.)
- f) As far as is possible, ensure that no victimisation or further problem occurs once a complaint has been resolved.

Employee Responsibilities

- I.6. All employees have a responsibility to help ensure that the dignity of all College employees is respected in the workplace. They should ensure that their behaviour towards others is professional and appropriate at all times; that it does not cause offence and could not in any way be regarded as harassment.
- I.7. Employees should discourage harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable.
- I.8. Employees should attend specified mandatory training as directed.
- I.9. If an employee is the victim of harassment the employee should follow the steps outlined in the Bullying and Harassment Procedure.